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ORIGINAL STORY
Yatsuki Wakatsu
CHARACTER DESIGN
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The Other World's Books Depend on the Bean Counter

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THE OTHER WORLD'S BOOKS
DEPEND ON THE BEAN COUNTER

CAN I LEAVE YOU IN CHARGE, ORJEF?
!
THERE'S SOMEWHERE I NEED TO BE AT ONCE.
HIS HIGHNESS ISN'T HERE RIGHT NOW.
LET'S SORT OUR LUGGAGE FIRST. WE CAN WRITE UP REPORTS LATER.
...JUST COME BACK AS SOON AS YOU'RE DONE.
I KNOW.
HE MUST BE GOING TO SEE KONDOU...
Chapter 31

LET'S GO, DIANA!
CAPTAIN INDOLARK!
I'M IN A HURRY. IT CAN WAIT.
UM... BUT!
SEI'S AT THE CHURCH RIGHT NOW!

MASTER SEIICHI-ROU...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU APPEAR UNWELL.

KONDOU-SAN! SIEGVOLD-SAN!
BUT YOU'RE QUITE PALE...
...I'M FINE.
YOUR HOLI-NESS ...
... AND ...
GOOD MORNING!
SARRAAA (SWISH)
... YOUR HIGH-NESS ...

NO NEED FOR SUCH FORMALITY.
WHEN I DRESS THIS WAY...
...YOU MAY ADDRESS ME AS "YURI"!
UGH...
YURI-SAMA HAS AGREED TO SUPPORT MY CRAM SCHOOL!
SINCE THE TWO OF US ARE ON THE SAME PAGE...
...HE'S COME IN DISGUISE TO INSPECT THE ALMS-HOUSE TODAY!

MEN IN LOVE SURE MOVE QUICKLY!
GUI (YANK)
COME HERE A SEC.
ZURIRI (DRAG)
WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOUR HIGH..... I MEAN, YURI-SAMA?
PURURURURU (TREMBLE)
YOUR SUGGES-TIONS WERE GOOD, BUT...
...WHY DOES YUA ACT LIKE THAT AROUND SIEGVOLD !?
I THOUGHT ARESH WAS THE ONE SHE LIKED...
...BUT ARE EARNEST, STRAIT-LACED GUYS HER TYPE INSTEAD!?
AAAAAAH!
I DON'T KNOW.
WHY DON'T YOU FIGURE THAT OUT ON YOUR OWN?

YOU'VE SEEN THE TWO OF THEM TOGETHER PLENTY OF TIMES, HAVEN'T YOU!?
I SUPPOSE, BUT...
...MAYBE SHE JUST LIKES HIS LOOKS?
HIS HAIR COLOR IS EASY ON THE EYES...
HIS HAIR !?
EVEN THOUGH SILVER AND GOLD ARE HAIR COLORS EXCLUSIVE TO THE ROYAL FAMILY!?
YURI-SAMA!
DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE THE ALMS-HOUSE?
ON MY WAY!
YURAA (DIZZY)
KON-DOU!
COME GIVE US A TOUR!
RIGHT.

.....
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
...YES.
YOUR HOLINESS!
PAA (BEAM)
ぱぁっ

GOOD MORNING!
TO (TEP)
TO
TO
GOOD MORNING, SELIO-KUN.
WHO?
HUH-?
MISTER!
SIGMA-KUN!?
I'M SO GLAD I FOUND YOU...

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
WHEN I TOLD MOM ABOUT THE SCHOOL...
GET GOIN'!! SIGMAAA!!!
BEEEEK!
SHA
SHA
SHA
SHA
SHA (SHOOM)
INSTANT CLOTHES CHANGE
...SHE SAID I NEEDED TO SIGN UP RIGHT AWAY...
... BEFORE THE NOBLES CHANGED THEIR MINDS...
THAT'S PERFECT TIMING.
WE CAN EXPLAIN THE SPONSOR SYSTEM TO THE CHILDREN FROM THE ALMSHOUSE AND THE ONES FROM TOWN AT THE SAME TIME.
SPON... SOR?
IT MEANS SOMEONE WHO PAYS FOR THE SCHOOL. HE'S OVER THERE IN THE TURBAN.
I'm not a noble, but...
...that man is very important, so please be careful.
HISO (WHSP)
ヒソ...
PISH! (STEP)
ひゃっ
HEY... WHAT'S THIS KID TO YOU?

HE'S SOMEONE I'VE RECRUITED.
RE-CRUITED? ...FROM WHERE?
HIS STALL IN THE CITY.
HE'S A GOOD KID—CLEVER, INDEPENDENT, DRIVEN.
I EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM HIM.
HEY... MISTER!
KAAA (BLUSH)
.....
PON (PAT)
ぽん…
DIDN'T I TELL YOU, SELIO?
THIS IS THE KIND OF PERSON MASTER SEIICHIROU IS.

INSTEAD OF LETTING PREJUDICE AND OTHERS' OPINIONS CLOUD YOUR JUDGMENT...
...YOU SHOULD OBSERVE PEOPLE WITH YOUR OWN EYES.
MY OWN EYES...
?
SELIO-SAN? WHAT'S WRONG?
FUTA (FREEZE)
ぴたっ...
!?

I'M HERE!
IST-SAN!?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
GIVEN HOW YOU ACTED YESTERDAY, I ASSUMED YOU'D GO SEE A SACRED RELIC.
AND HERE I THOUGHT HE ONLY DID THINGS TO BENEFIT HIS OWN DESIRES...
HIS INSTINCTS ARE SHARP! AND HE'S SURPRISINGLY ADAPTABLE!

.....
WHATEVER HIS REASON... I CAN'T LET HIM RUN FREE HERE!
PISHI (STIFF)
BIKU (FLINCH)
SUTON (THUMP)
DID YOU ALREADY PRAY TODAY?
NO, NOT YET.
WE HAD GUESTS TODAY.
I SEE!
THEN CAN I COME WITH YOU WHEN IT'S TIME TO PRAY?
FUNYAN (FWUFF)
PAA (BEAM)
YOU WANNA PRAY TOO? OKAY!

THAT'S IST-SAN, THE VICE DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPART-MENT.
WHO IS HE, MASTER SEIICHI-ROU?
HE WANTS TO PRAY—
IN OTHER WORDS, TO REPLENISH THE SACRED RELIC WITH MAGICAL ENERGY.
He wants to shake your hand!
AH!
?
MASTER IST.
WELCOME TO THE CHURCH OF ABRAN.
ARE YOU GOING TO PRAY TOO?
I'D LOVE TO JOIN YOU.
DIRECTOR ZOLTAN'S REALLY SUFFERED WITH HIM.
HELLO!

HANG ON A MINUTE.
HAVE YOU PRAYED BEFORE, SHIRAISHI-SAN?
I HAVE.
I PRAY MOST TIMES THAT I COME HELP AT THE ALMS-HOUSE...
!?
YUA, YOU...!
HUH?
...!
GASHI (GRAB)
がし
...YURI-SAMA?

.....
I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH MAGICAL ENERGY IS SHARED WITH SACRED RELICS.
IF THEY CAN ABSORB EVERYTHING WITHOUT LIMIT...
...THE HOLY MAIDEN, FOR WHOM PURIFICATION IS THE GREATEST PRIORITY, MAY HAVE HAD HER ENERGY EXTRACTED TOO.
SHE'S BEEN TOLD NOT TO USE ANY MAGICAL ENERGY OUTSIDE OF HER TRAINING, BUT...
...THAT MAY HAVE HAD AN EFFECT ON HER PURIFICATION.

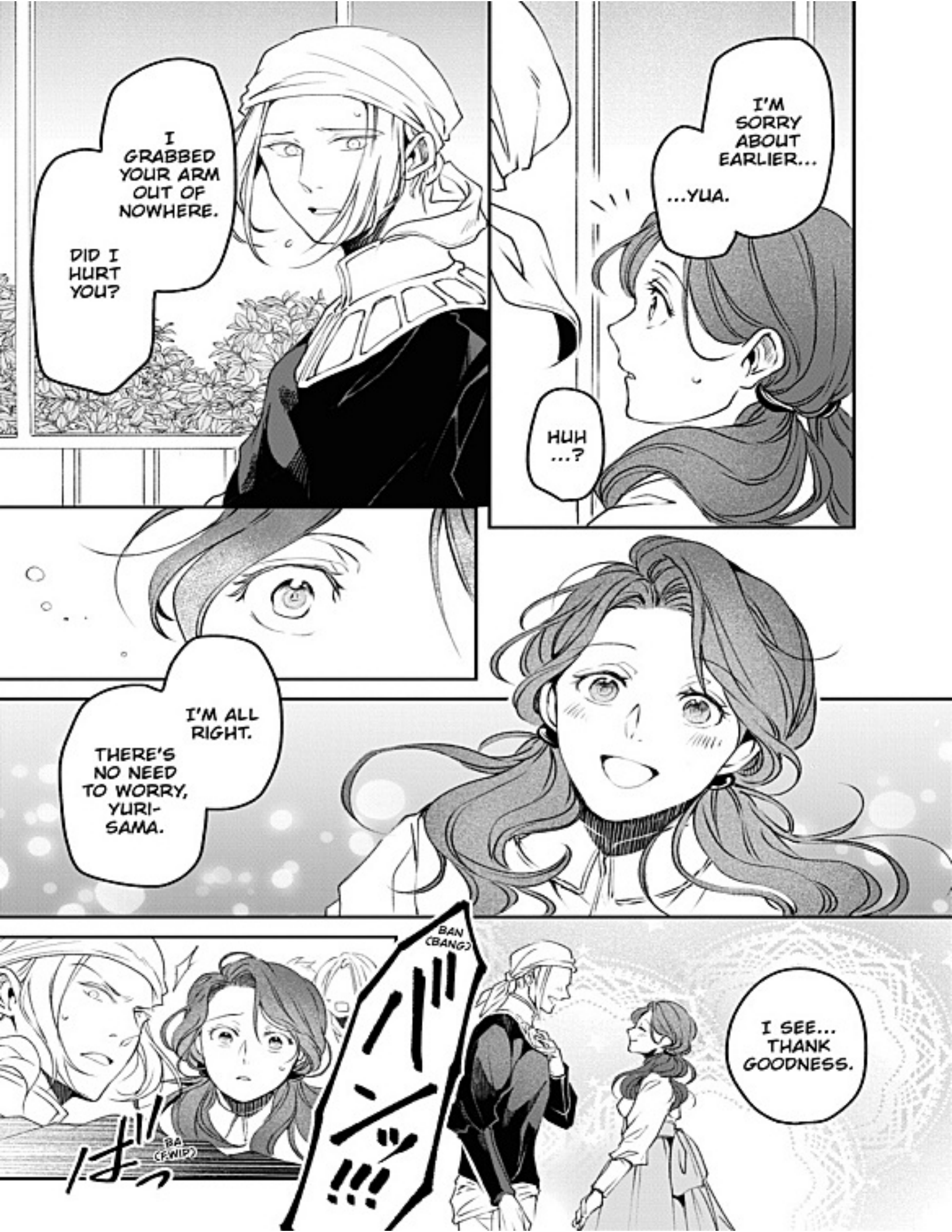
HUH...? OH... OKAY...
...PLEASE SHOW YURI-SAMA THE REST OF THE ALMSHOUSE, SHIRAISHI-SAN.
IST-SAN AND I WILL GO PRAY, SO...
PACHI (BLINK)
SHE DIDN'T REPORT THIS TO THE PALACE ...?

YOU DON'T MIND, DO YOU, YURI-SAMA ...?
NOT AT ALL... PLEASE CONTINUE THE TOUR, YUA.
..... SURE!
ALL RIGHT ...
SHALL WE HEAD OUT...
...FATHER SIEGVOLD?
WHERE TO...?
THE SACRED RELIC.

!...
OUTSIDERS REQUIRE THE BISHOP'S PERMISSION TO ENTER THAT AREA.
I SEE...
THEN COULD YOU ASK HIM FOR ME?
BUT SUCH A SUDDEN REQUEST ...
FORGET ABOUT ME FOR THE TIME BEING...
.....
THAT MAN CAME HERE ALONE, WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT, TO PRAY.
ふよ FUYO (FLOUNCE)
ふよよ FUYOYO
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS..... DON'T YOU?
THE SORCERY DEPARTMENT RANKS HIGHER THAN THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT.
THE VICE DIRECTOR IS ESSENTIALLY DEMANDING TO BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE.
HE WON'T LISTEN IF YOU TELL HIM NO.
I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT TROUBLE HE MIGHT CAUSE, SO...
...PLEASE OBTAIN PERMIS-SION QUICKLY.

I CAN'T KEEP HIM RESTRAINED FOR VERY LONG.
WAKI (WIGGLE)
わきわきわきわきわきわきわきわき
WAKI
I'LL GO AT ONCE!

PITA (HALT)
ぴた


I GRABBED YOUR ARM OUT OF NOWHERE.
DID I HURT YOU?
I'M SORRY ABOUT EARLIER...
...YUA.
HUH ...?
I'M ALL RIGHT.
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY, YURI-SAMA.
BAN (BANG)
!!!
BA (F-WIP)
I SEE... THANK GOODNESS.

ARESH-
SAN!

MASTER KONDOU!
I'M SO SORRY THE REVISED EARNINGS REPORT ISN'T READY YET.
I BELIEVE I CAN HAVE IT READY TOMORROW...
I'M SORRY TO MAKE THINGS EVEN HARDER ON YOU WHEN YOU'RE SO BUSY.
PEKO (BOW)
PEKO
IT'S ALL RIGHT. TOMOR-ROW WILL BE FINE.
TOMORROW WILL BE MY LAST DAY HERE...
I REALLY NEED TO WRAP THINGS UP TODAY...
(CREAK)
THIS IS THE CHAPEL.

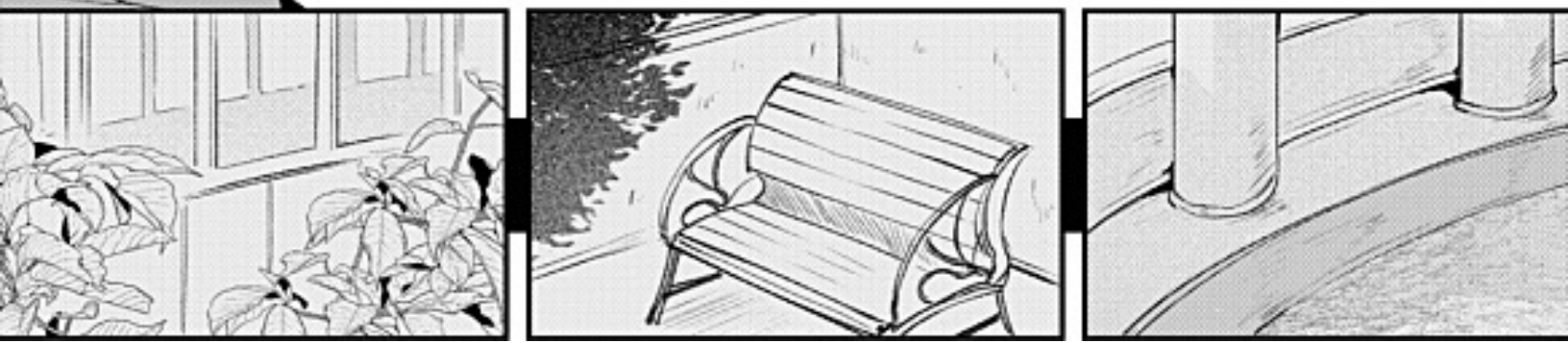
IT'S AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER...
UTTORI (DAZE)

MISTER?

WHOA! A HORSE!
YOU'RE BACK FROM THE EXPEDITION, ARESH?
YES... THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER RETURNED SAFELY A SHORT WHILE AGO.

I SEE. GOOD WORK.
WELCOME BACK, ARESH-SAN!
YES... THANK YOU.
CHIRA (GLANCE)

Chapter 32



WHERE IS HE?
"HE" ...?
OHH, YOU MEAN KONDOU?
HE WENT WITH THE ALMSHOUSE CHILDREN TO VISIT THE PRAYER CHAMBER.
THE PRAYER CHAMBER ...?
DO YOU MEAN THE PLACE WITH THE SACRED RELIC?

LINE UP HERE.
SU (SHP)
すっ…
LET US BEGIN THE PRAYER.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG... I WAS UNABLE TO CONTAIN MY MAGICAL ENERGY...
...AND CAUSED TROUBLE FOR THE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE ON A DAILY BASIS.

I EVEN BEGAN TO WORRY I WAS SOME SORT OF DEMON CHILD.
I WAS NOTHING MORE THAN AN INCONVE-NIENCE...
...UNABLE TO SO MUCH AS CONTROL MY OWN BODY.

BUT THAT WAS WHEN I WAS BROUGHT TO THIS CHAPEL.

I PRAYED TO ABRAN LIKE IT WAS MY ONLY HOPE...
...AND FOUND THAT I HAD MIRACU-LOUSLY STABILIZED.
I MADE A VOW IN THAT MOMENT...
...TO SERVE GOD FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

DOESN'T THAT JUST MEAN THE SACRED RELIC ABSORBED HIS EXCESS ENERGY...?
THIS PLACE IS WHAT KEEPS ME GOING IN LIFE.
...A PLACE THAT KEEPS YOU GOING...
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT, MASTER SEIICHIROU?
...I SEE.

WHAT'S WRONG?
IT JUST SEEMS LIKE WE PRAYED A DIFFERENT WAY LAST TIME...
WHOA...
!?
...HUH?
YOU'VE... PRAYED BEFORE?
FIVE YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS BAP-TIZED...
DID THE METHOD CHANGE?
I SEE.
I HAVEN'T PRAYED IN A WHILE, SO THIS IS NEW TO ME TOO.
IT'LL DISRUPT INTERNAL ENERGY CIRCULA-TION, AND...
...SOME CHILDREN MIGHT EVEN LOSE CONTROL.
IT WILL ABSORB TOO MUCH MAGICAL ENERGY THIS WAY.
HUH ...?

ABSORB... MAGICAL ENERGY?
ISN'T THIS A RITUAL TO THANK GOD FOR HIS PROTECTION?
.....
LOOKS LIKE THAT PRIEST HAS NOTICED TOO.
...MAYBE THEY TAKE THIS MUCH EVERY TIME NOW.
YOU CAN DETECT MAGICAL ENERGY LEVELS !?
YEAH, SURE CAN.
THE SORCERY DEPARTMENT IS MADE OF PEOPLE WITH STRONG MAGICAL PERCEPTION.
KIRA (SPARKLE)
KIRA
YOU MEAN YOU'RE A SORCERER, MISTER !?
MUST BE NICE...
I CAN'T PERCEIVE THAT STUFF AT ALL.
I WISH THERE WAS A TOOL THAT COULD LET PEOPLE SEE AMOUNTS OF MAGICAL ENERGY.
HEH-HEH!
YOU BET!
FUSHU (FSH)
ADMIRATION
WOW! IT'S AMAZING THAT YOU CAN SEE MAGICAL ENERGY!

A TOOL TO VISUALIZE MAGICAL ENERGY?
YES.
THAT WAY, MAGICAL ENERGY ENVIRON-MENTS COULD ALWAYS REMAIN STABLE...
ZUU
HOW WOULD IT WORK?
WOULD YOU PUT IT ON YOUR EYES?
LOOK THROUGH THEM LIKE GLASSES?
U-UM...
THAT WOULD BE FINE ON ITS OWN, BUT...
...IF POSSI-BLE...
HE'S SO CLOSE...
IF POSSI-BLE?
WHAT? WHAT?

...MAYBE COLORS ...
COLORS ...?
SO THE COLOR WOULD CHANGE BASED ON HOW MUCH MAGICAL ENERGY THERE IS?
BUT HOW WOULD YOU DISPLAY THE VALUE?
NUM-BERS?
WORDS ?
WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE WHO CAN'T READ?
MAYBE... IT COULD BE PLACED SOMEWHERE A LOT OF PEOPLE COULD SEE THE AMOUNT ALL AT ONCE.

YES.
IF YOU MAKE IT SO THAT IT CHANGES COLOR FROM THE PRESSURE FLUCTUATIONS AS IT EXPANDS...
...YOU CAN MEASURE THE AMOUNT OF MAGICAL ENERGY BY COLOR!
IT EXPANDS ...?
IN THAT CASE, YOU COULD PUT IT IN A RECTANGULAR VESSEL...
...THAT ONLY ALLOWS MAGICAL ENERGY TO COME FROM UNDERNEATH.
SO THE ONLY PLACE IT CAN EXPAND IS HIGHER UP, RIGHT?
UM, NOT EXACTLY...
ARE THERE ANY MATERIALS THAT TRANSFORM WHEN EXPOSED TO MAGICAL ENERGY?
THERE SURE ARE.
IT'S TECHNICALLY POISONOUS, BUT THERE'S A SUBSTANCE CALLED "KELSIL."
IT'S EXTRACTED FROM A CRYSTAL COMMONLY USED IN MAGIC RESEARCH AND EXPANDS WITH MAGICAL ENERGY.

IT'S DONE!!
PAN (CLAP)
N—
NO, IT'S STILL JUST A CONCEPT ...!
I CAN PROBABLY MAKE IT WITH THE STUFF IN THE LAB. ♪
STOP. STOP!
IT'S DONE. IT'S DONE! ♪
THEY'RE PRAYING!!
.....
GYU (GRIP)

BA (FWIP)
KATA (SHUDDER)
KATA
KATA
SU (SWIP)
WHAT!?
THIS IS BAD. HE'S GONNA OVER-FLOW.

URK...!
AGH...
JARA (JANGLE)
POU (GLOW)

BIRI (ZAP)
AH.
NO USE. HERE IT COMES.
!
MASTER IST? WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU ...?
DO (BOOM)
FURA (STAGGER)

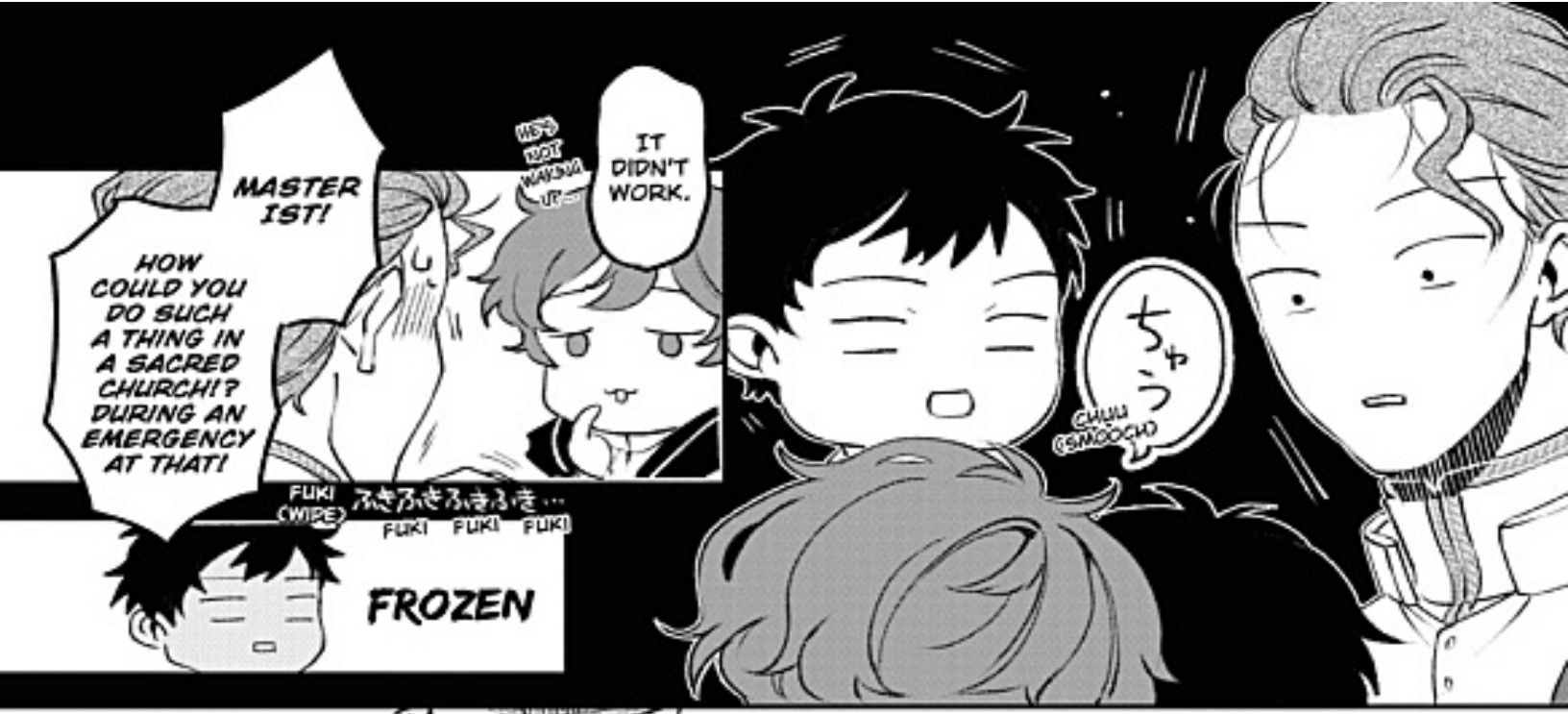
MISTER!
LOOK OUT!!!

DOON
(KABOOM)
WAS THAT AN EXPLO-SION!?

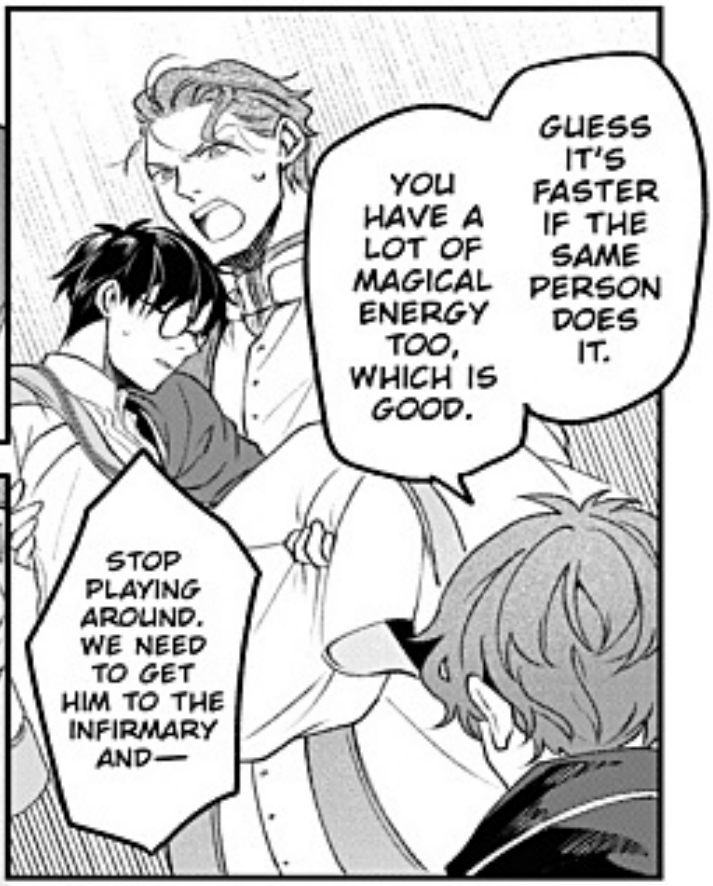
BASA (FLAP)
BASA
IT CAME FROM OVER THERE...
THE PRAYER CHAMBER!
!?
ARESH!!
MISTER!
MISTER!!

?
THANK GOODNESS, MISTER...

MASTER SEIICHI-ROU!
PLEASE HANG IN THERE!
MIS... TER?
BUT WHY...? IT DIDN'T EVEN HIT HIM!
MASTER IST, HE'S...
AHHH, LOOKS LIKE HIS BARRIER WAS GONE.
KUI (TUG)
くい


MASTER IST!
HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A THING IN A SACRED CHURCH!? DURING AN EMERGENCY AT THAT!
HE'S NOT WAKING UP—
IT DIDN'T WORK.
ちゅう
CHUU (SMOOCH)
FUKI (WIPE)
ふきふきふきふき…
FUKI FUKI FUKI
FROZEN

AH...I WOULDN'T DO THAT.
IF YOU TAKE HIM THERE...


GUESS IT'S FASTER IF THE SAME PERSON DOES IT.
YOU HAVE A LOT OF MAGICAL ENERGY TOO, WHICH IS GOOD.
STOP PLAYING AROUND. WE NEED TO GET HIM TO THE INFIRMARY AND—

...KONDOU WILL DIE.

SO, FATHER...

...WON'T YOU PLEASE SLEEP WITH KONDOU?
WH-WH-WH-WHAT ARE YOU ...!?
!?
DIDN'T YOU JUST APPLY A BARRIER TO HIM, FATHER?
BUT WHY DOES THAT MEAN I HAVE TO S-S-SLEEP WITH HIM!?
HMM?
DON'T YOU KNOW KONDOU HAS NO RESISTANCE TO MAGICAL ENERGY?
HUH ...?
YOU MEAN IT'S NOT ONLY MAGICULES ...?

A CERTAIN SORCERER...
...HAS BEEN APPLYING BARRIERS TO KONDOU'S BODY TO BLOCK EVERYTHING OUT.
HAS MASTER SEIICHIROU BEEN COMING TO THIS CHURCH...
...KNOWING IT WOULD HARM HIS BODY?
DESPITE HIS WEAKENED STATE ONCE HIS BARRIER FADED...
...HE STILL CHOSE TO COME TO THE PRAYER CHAMBER...
MASTER SEIICHIROU... WHAT A PERSON YOU ARE...

KONDOU HAS SUDDEN-ONSET MAGIC-SICKNESS RIGHT NOW.
IF HE ISN'T ACCLIMATED SOON, IT'LL RAVAGE HIS BODY.
AH...SO THAT'S WHY YOU DID THAT TO HIM...
SEIICHI-ROU...

IT WASN'T ENOUGH, SINCE HIS CONSTITUTION DOESN'T ADAPT WELL TO MAGICAL ENERGY.
A SORCERER'S MAGICAL ENERGY WILL BE EASIEST FOR HIM TO ACCLIMATE TO, SO...
...PLEASE, QUICKLY FILL HIS BODY WITH MAGICAL ENERGY.
VERY WELL.
THIS IS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH.
I WILL TAKE RESPON-SIBILITY AND HEAL MASTER SEIICHIROU BY—
DOGA (WHAM)
GOKU (GULP)
GYU (SQUEEZE)
!
PARA (CRUMBLE)

THERE IS NO NEED ...!
WHAT...!? WHO ARE YOU...?

GYU
(SQUEEZE)
ZAWA
(SHUDDER)
GU
(CLENCH)
Chapter
33

ARESH!
PITA (FREEZE)
ARESH...
SO THIS IS CAPTAIN INDOLARK OF THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER?

"THAT"... MASTER SEIICHIROU IS A PERSON, NOT A THING.
AND HE'S IN A WEAKENED STATE RIGHT NOW.
THAT'S MY RESPON-SIBILITY TO CARE FOR.
I'LL TAKE HIM NOW.
KOTSU
KOTSU
I WON'T HAND HIM OVER TO YOU.

A... RESH... SAMA...?
MASTER SEIICHI-ROU! YOU'RE AWAKE!?
SEIICHI-ROU!
...AAH ...
I'M SO GLAD... YOU'RE SAFE...
HAAH...

KOTSU
CCLACK!
AH... SIEGVOLD.
ARESH HAS BEEN CARING FOR KONDOU'S HEALTH ON A REGULAR BASIS.
YOU CAN HAND HIM OVER. HE'S SAFE WITH ARESH.

PASA (FLAP)

WILL MASTER SEIICHIROU... BE OKAY?
YEAH, SINCE HE'S WITH ARESH.
HE'S USED TO IT, AFTER ALL.
USED TO—
... HUH?

DIRECTOR! THERE'S AN EMER-GENCY!
QUELL-BUS. WE'RE GOING TO USE THE ROOM IN THE BACK.
THIS ISN'T A HOTEL FOR HOOKUPS!
WHAT IS—
KONDOU!

HE'S DEFINITELY MAGIC-SICK, BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN SOMETHING MIGHT GO WRONG.
IT'LL BE EASIER FOR SOMEONE WHO UNDER-STANDS TO EXPLAIN THINGS TO HIM AND TREAT HIM.
MIGHT GO WRONG ...?
EXPLAIN THINGS, HUH...?
I'M GOING TO GET AN ULCER IF IT GOES LIKE LAST TIME.
HE HAS NO EXTERNAL WOUNDS.
DO YOU NEED MORE TIME WITH HIM?
KATAN (CLATTER)
カタン…

...
ARESH.
HOW MANY MAGICAL ENERGY RECOVERY TONICS DID YOU TAKE THIS TIME?
GUI (GRAB)
...ONE.
DON'T LIE TO ME!
YOU DRANK THEM ON THE WAY HERE WHILE YOU ACCLIMATED KONDOU, DIDN'T YOU?
IF YOU'RE RELYING ON TONICS TO GET BY...
...THEN TREATING KONDOU PROPERLY WILL DRAIN YOU OF MORE MAGICAL ENERGY THAN YOU HAVE TO SPARE!
I KNOW.
THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE.
...!

DON'T WORRY. I WON'T MESS IT UP.
TON (TAP)
PATAN (SLAM)
I KNOW MY MAGICAL ENERGY LEVELS BEST.
...PLEASE DON'T DO ANYTHING TOO RECKLESS.
IT'S HOT.
MY HEAD ...
NO, MY WHOLE BODY HURTS.
IT FEELS LIKE...
...THAT TIME I GOT THE FLU.

...I HAD THEM SEND ME DATA, THINKING I COULD WORK ON IT AT HOME...

SINCE I COULDN'T GO TO THE OFFICE...

WHEN I WAS AT WORK, I DIDN'T REST UNTIL THE FEVER KNOCKED ME OUT.

I LIKELY WOULDN'T HAVE SUFFERED SO MUCH IF I HAD JUST GONE TO THE HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY.

...AND MY FEVER BROKE FORTY DEGREES CELSIUS.

LIKE I'M BATHING IN A HOT SPRING.

...I FEEL NICE AND WARM—

INSTEAD...

I CAN'T MOVE, BUT I DON'T FEEL AS AWFUL AS I DID BACK THEN.

I'VE... FELT THIS BEFORE.

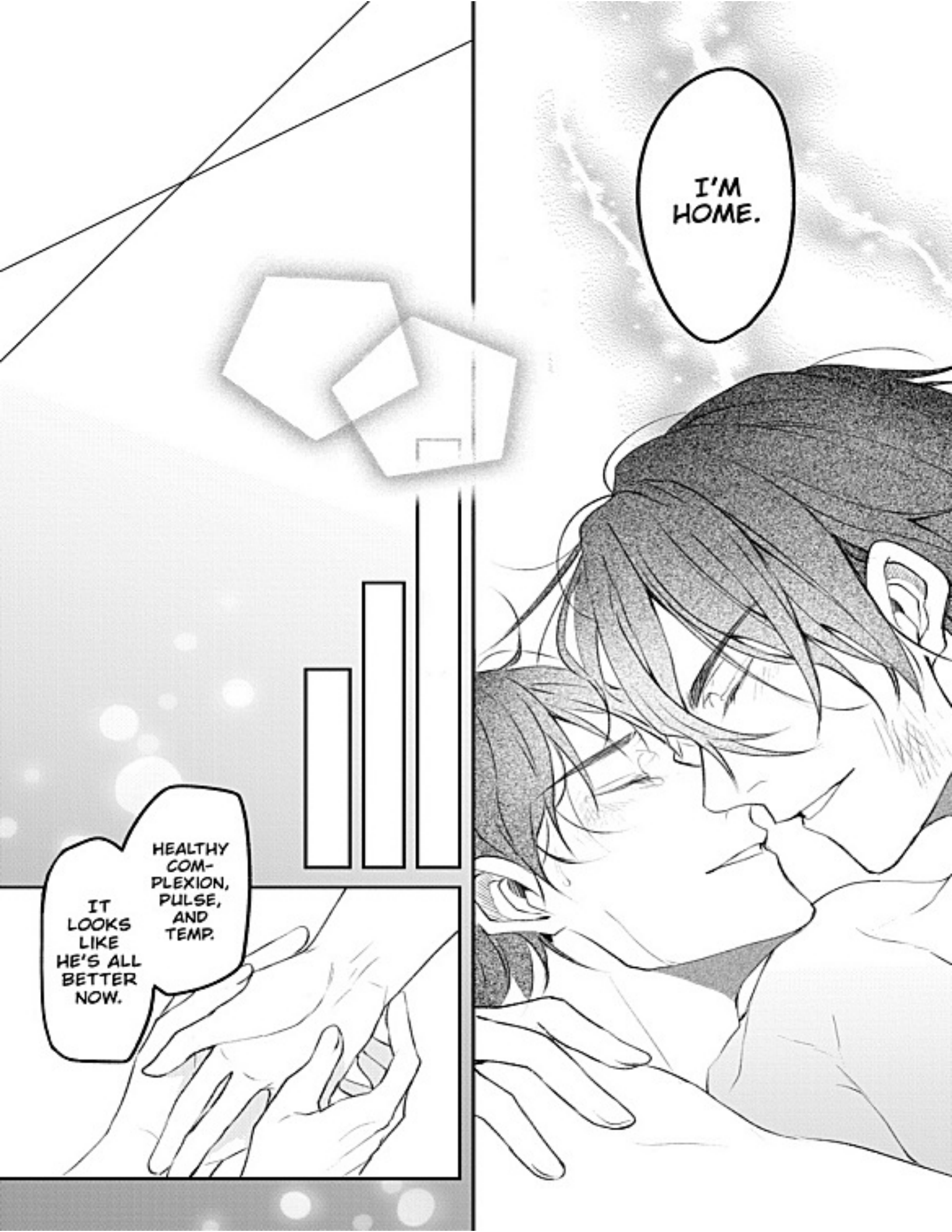
IT'S...

AND I'M NOT SCARED, EVEN THOUGH IT FEELS LIKE I'M BARELY CONSCIOUS.

A... RESH-SAMA ...?
THIS... IS GOING TO TAKE A WHILE LONGER...
...YOU RECKLESS IDIOT.
MM ...!
FINALLY AWAKE?
GOOD GRIEF...
PIKLIN (TWITCH)
WHEN DID YOU... GET BACK ...?
THIS MORN-ING.
I RETURNED, HEARD YOU WERE AT THE CHURCH, RAN STRAIGHT THERE...
...AND STILL BARELY MADE IT IN TIME.

YOU REALLY... DON'T LISTEN, AND YOU DON'T VALUE YOUR OWN BODY.
LOOK WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU FOR JUST A SECOND.
YOU DIDN'T EVEN SEND A SINGLE LETTER...
...AND THEN YOU GO AND COLLAPSE, SO ANOTHER MAN NEARLY HAS TO SLEEP WITH YOU...!
I TRULY ...
...MIGHT NOT HAVE FORGIVEN YOU FOR THAT.
ARESH-SAMA...

WELCOME HOME.
I MEAN IT... WELCOME HOME.


I'M HOME.
HEALTHY COM-PLEXION, PULSE, AND TEMP.
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S ALL BETTER NOW.

GACHA (KACHAK) ガチャ…
HUH !?
KEEP AN EYE ON HIM …?
HEY, ARESH!

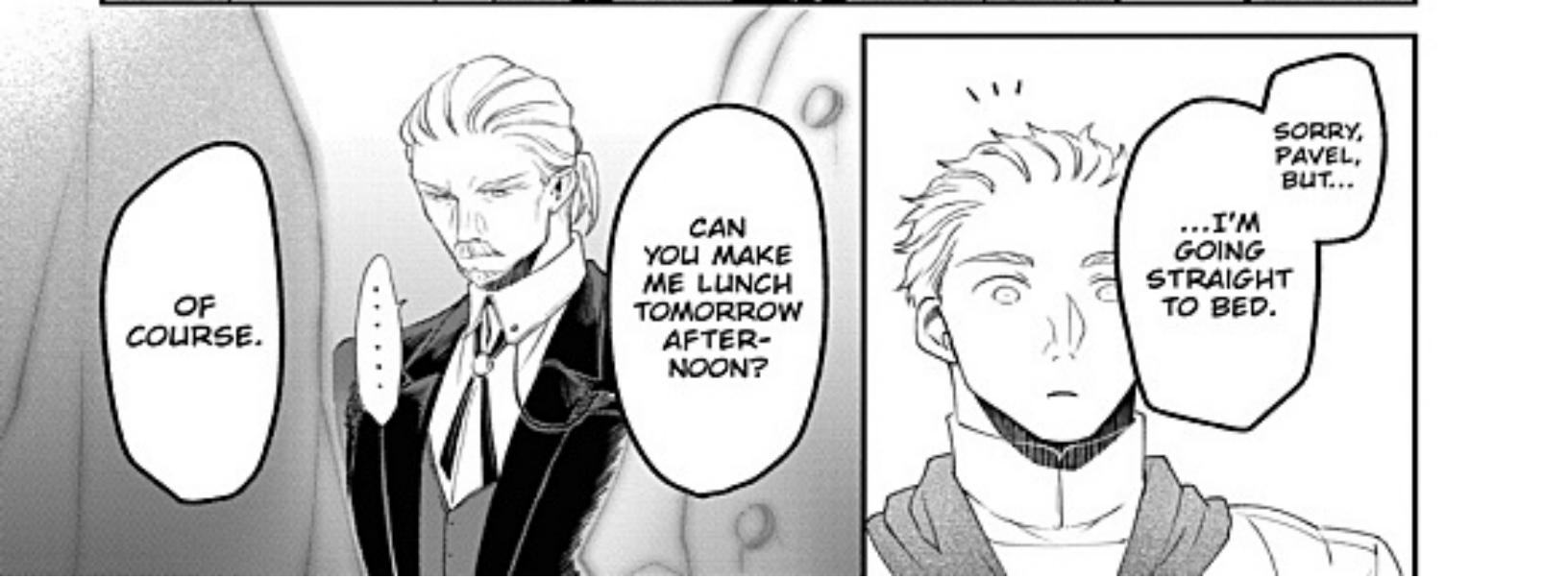
I'M HEADING BACK TO THE MANOR.
KEEP AN EYE ON SEIICHIROU WHEN HE WAKES UP.

NICE WORK TODAY, DIRECTOR.
… GOOD GRIEF …
BATAN (SLAM) バタン

WELCOME HOME!
MASTER!

YOU WORKED HARD TODAY, DIANA.
NOW REST UP.
WE'RE GLAD YOU'VE RETURNED FROM THE EXPEDITION SAFELY.
THANK YOU.
MASTER, WE...
...HEARD WORD OF MASTER KONDOU'S CONDITION.
HOW IS HE FARING NOW ...?

HE'S STABLE AND SLEEPING IN THE INFIRM-ARY.
QUELLBUS IS WITH HIM, SO THERE'S NO NEED FOR CONCERN.
...IS THAT SO?
WHAT A RELIEF ...


SORRY, PAVEL, BUT...
...I'M GOING STRAIGHT TO BED.
CAN YOU MAKE ME LUNCH TOMORROW AFTER-NOON?
OF COURSE.

ピタ
PITA (HALT)
YOUNG MASTER.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING FROM HERE ON OUT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT TO RELAX NOW.
I REALLY ...
...CAN'T EVER DECEIVE YOU... CAN I, VALTOM?
ドサッ
DOSA (THUD)

...ARESH-
SAMA?

HOW ARE YOU?
...MY BODY STILL FEELS HEAVY.
I'M SURE... YOU HAVE TO REST FOR THREE DAYS.
DO YOU FEEL UP FOR A CHAT?
YES ...
I GUESS IT'S FINE, THEN. BRING HIM IN.
YOU MAY ENTER NOW.

FIRST DAY OF HOSPITALIZATION
Chapter 34

FATHER SIEGVOLD.
AHH...IT'S TRULY A RELIEF TO SEE...
...THAT YOU'RE ALL RIGHT ...
GU (GRIT)
MASTER SEIICHI-ROU!
YOU HAVE MY SINCEREST APOLOGIES!
NO... THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT...
PLEASE LIFT YOUR HEAD.
I CAN'T ...!

I'M THE ONE WHO ALLOWED IT TO AFFECT MY HEALTH THAT DAY...
...AND MADE THE DECISION TO VISIT THE CHAPEL.
I...
...KNEW YOU HAD NO RESISTANCE TO MAGICAL ENERGY...
...YET I STILL PUT YOU IN HARM'S WAY.
BESIDES, IF YOU HADN'T PUT UP A BARRIER...
...EVEN IF I HAD MANAGED TO ESCAPE DEATH...
...I STILL WOULD HAVE BEEN GRAVELY INJURED AND BECOME MAGIC-SICK.
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME...
...FATHER SIEGVOLD.

ABOUT THAT...
THE INCIDENT ON THAT DAY...
...WAS NO SIMPLE ACCIDENT.
HIS HIGHNESS ASKED FOR AN EXPLA-NATION...
...ONCE THE TWO OF YOU LEFT THE PRAYER CHAMBER.

A BALL OF MAGICAL ENERGY WAS SHOT TOWARD KONDOU...
...WHICH SIEGVOLD BLOCKED WITH A BARRIER.
THE CHILD RESPONSIBLE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AND...
...IT'S LIKELY HIS MAGICAL ENERGY WAS UNSTABLE...

YOU THERE, BOY. YOU LOOK LIKE YOU WANT TO SAY SOME-THING.
!
DOKI (BADUMP)

THERE'S NOT MUCH TO GO ON, EVEN IF IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.

SPEAK. I'LL ALLOW IT.

I GUESS YOU WERE BUSY EXPLAINING THE PRAYER TO KONDOU.
FORGIVE ME...
YOU DIDN'T NOTICE, SIEGVOLD?
THE PRAYERS AND THE METHOD BOTH CHANGED?
YOU CAN REPENT LATER!
RIGHT NOW, WE NEED TO FIND THE CAUSE.
IT'S OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF MY DUTIES, BUT I SHOULD'VE BEEN MORE ATTENTIVE.
KOKUN (NOD)
MEEE!
WE NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN RECREATE IT—
THERE WAS THE PRAYER ITSELF AND THE METHOD USED TO CARRY IT OUT.
I CAN DO IT!

MASTER IST REENACTED THE PRAYER...
...AND FOUND IT USED MORE MAGICAL ENERGY THAN NEEDED...
...WHICH CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT PRONE TO ENERGY MALFUNC-TIONS.
PIKU (PERK)
A... SCHEME ...?
...IN THE END, THERE WAS ONE PERSON WHO SET THE SCHEME IN MOTION...
YES... IT WAS MASTER IST WHO INFORMED ME.
WHILE I WAS STOPPING THE MAGICAL ENERGY FROM RUNNING WILD...
...SOMEONE INTENTIONALLY DETONATED THE BOY'S ENERGY AND SHOT IT AT KONDOU.

WHO IN THAT ROOM...

...WAS CAPABLE OF SUCH A THING...?

TH-THE WAY YOU REFERRED TO ME FELT A BIT FORMAL.
...? BUT AREN'T I DOING THAT?
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADDRESS ME BY NAME.
THANK YOU SO MUCH, FATHER SIEGVOLD...
...SIEG-VOLD-SAMA.
ALL RIGHT, THEN ...
YES!

DAY TWO
YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AND TEMPERATURE LOOK GOOD.
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO GO HOME TOMORROW AT THIS RATE.
YOU HAVE A VISITOR, KONDOU!
ガチャッ
GACHA (KACHAK)
AH... NO...
ARE YOU IN PAIN RIGHT NOW?
THOUGH, YOU'RE A BIT PALE...
VAL-TOM-SAN!

HOW ARE YOU FEELING...
...MASTER KONDOU?
I'VE RECOVERED WELL, THANKS TO ARESH-SAMA.
THAT IS GOOD TO HEAR.
HERE, A CHANGE OF CLOTHES FOR TOMOR-ROW.
MILAN
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
PLEASE HAVE A SEAT.
I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM THE YOUNG MASTER.
DOKI (BADMP)

HE SAYS THAT...
...HE'LL COME AND PICK YOU UP TOMOR-ROW...
...SO YOU CAN RELAX AND AWAIT HIM.
!
I SEE...
YOUNG MASTER IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING TREATMENT AT THE MANOR.

...WHAT?
STRICTLY SPEAKING...
...HIS MAGICAL ENERGY IS DEPLETED, AND HE'S TAKEN TOO MANY RESTORATION TONICS TO RECOVER.
MAGIC RESTORATION TONICS CIRCULATE AND INCREASE MAGICAL ENERGY WITHIN THE BODY...
...BUT TAKING THEM IN LARGE DOSES ISN'T RECOMMENDED DUE TO THE SEVERE SIDE EFFECTS.
AS SOMEONE WHO HAS COLLAPSED AFTER IMBIBING TOO MANY NUTRI-TIONAL TONICS...
...I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE DANGERS OF OVER-DOSING.

YOUNG MASTER HUNTED MAGIC BEASTS ON TOP OF HIS PURIFICATION EXPEDITION AND...
...HAD TO SUPPLEMENT YOU WITH ENERGY AS SOON AS HE RETURNED.
EVEN SOMEONE LIKE YOUNG MASTER, WHO WAS BORN WITH GREAT MAGICAL ENERGY...
...WOULD FIND SUCH EXTENSIVE USE TO BE PHYSICALLY TAXING.
I HAD THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE...
...THAT HE BROUGHT ME HERE FOR TREATMENT INSTEAD OF THE MANOR.
ARESH-SAMA WOULD NORMALLY...
...TAKE ME HOME TO KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON ME.
.....

I HAVE WATCHED OVER AND SUPPORTED HIM HIS WHOLE LIFE.
I...
...HAVE KNOWN THE YOUNG MASTER SINCE HE WAS A BOY.
THOUGH IT MAY BE IMPROPER FOR A FAMILY BUTLER TO SAY SO...
...I THINK OF YOUNG MASTER AS A SON.
MASTER KONDOU.

I AM PREPARED ...
...FOR THE CONSEQUENCES, AND...I AM FULLY AWARE THAT IT ISN'T WHAT YOUNG MASTER DESIRES...
...BUT PROTECTING HIS WELL-BEING IS MY UTMOST PRIORITY.
RIGHT ...

YOUNG MASTER'S CHANGED SINCE HE MET YOU, MASTER KONDOU.
HE HAS LOST HIS APATHY...
...AND BECOME A LIVELIER PERSON THAN I'VE EVER KNOWN HIM TO BE.
IT'S A GREAT JOY TO ME THAT...
...YOUNG MASTER HAS FALLEN IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE.
I VIEW YOU AS A SAVIOR, MASTER KONDOU...
...FOR GRANTING HIM A NEW LIFE.
HOWEVER, WHEN YOUNG MASTER'S HEALTH IS AT RISK...

I WISH TO HONOR HIS FEELINGS, BUT...
...THIS IS SOMETHING I MUST SAY, SO PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
PLEASE TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR HEALTH, MASTER KONDOU.
NO... YOU'RE ENTIRELY RIGHT.
PERHAPS I'M SIMPLY AN OLD MAN WHO'S MEDDLING...
I'VE...
...RELIED ON ARESH-SAMA TOO MUCH.

AFTER THE MAGIC BEAST EXTERMI-NATION, THE ONE DRIVING HIM PAST HIS LIMITS IS...
...ME, AND ME ALONE.
MY HABIT OF PUTTING WORK OVER MY HEALTH IS...
...NOW HARMING ARESH-SAMA'S HEALTH TOO.
I'M SORRY...
I WAS WORRIED TOO WHEN I HEARD HE WENT ON THE EXTER-MINATION MISSION...
...YET I TREATED HIM SO POORLY.
WHY DID I JUST ASSUME HE WOULD SAVE ME EVERY TIME?
...HOW PATHETIC.
THERE IS NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE TO ME.
YOUNG MASTER CHOSE TO GO ON THE HUNT IN THE FIRST PLACE BECAUSE HE WANTED TO IMPRESS YOU.

HOWEVER ...
...EVEN IF HE COMES TO RESENT ME...
...I INTEND TO PROTECT YOUNG MASTER'S WELL-BEING FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.
I'M KIND OF JEALOUS ...
ARESH-SAMA HAS...
...SOMEONE WHO CARES FOR HIM UNCONDITIONALLY.
MASTER KONDOU.
MOM... DAD...
I WONDER IF THEY'RE DOING WELL...

PLEASE DON'T EVER FORGET...
...THAT YOU HAVE PEOPLE WHO WISH TO SEE YOU HEALTHY.
YOU'RE LEAVING TODAY, HUH?
WELL? HOW DO YOU FEEL ...?
FINE, THANK YOU.
I GOT LOTS OF REST HERE.

ANYWAY, HOW MUCH DO I OWE THE INFIRMARY ...?
OHH, THERE'S NO NEED, SINCE YOU'RE A GOVERN-MENT OFFICIAL.
EXCEPT YOU HAD YOUR SUBORDINATES BRING STUFF TO WORK ON!
...I BARELY TOUCHED IT.
YOU'RE LOOKING A LOT BETTER.
?
WHOA...
SO THIS IS THE PERK OF WORKING AT THE PALACE...
I'M GRATEFUL FOR SUCH GOOD EMPLOYEE BENEFITS!

YOU'RE HERE EARLY, ARESH.
HI!
SURI (STROKE) すり…
IGNORING ME?

ARESH-SAMA LOOKS TOTALLY NORMAL.
IF VALTOM-SAN HADN'T TOLD ME THE DAY BEFORE...
...I MIGHT NOT HAVE EVER KNOWN HE'D BEEN CONFINED TO BED.
HE PROBABLY LEFT ME HERE...
...BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO SEE HIM IN SUCH A VULNERABLE STATE.
...I'M SORRY FOR WORRYING YOU.
GOOD GRIEF.

...?
YOU'RE WARM... DO YOU STILL HAVE A FEVER?
LET ME GO...
...NO, I'M FINE.
ARE YOU SURE? LET ME SEE YOUR FACE.
I SAID I'M FINE!
GEEZ...

HEY! QUIT FLIRTING AND GET OUT OF HERE ALREADY!
THIS IS THE MEDICAL DEPART-MENT!!!

Chapter 35
DIRECTOR CIRO.
GOOD TO GO?
YES, I'M READY.
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP.
DON'T BE SO RECKLESS NOW, GOT IT?
GOT IT.
UUUGH...
DO YOU REALLY, THOUGH?
YOU CAN SIGN OUT AT THE RECEPTION DESK.
RIGHT.

THE SAME GOES FOR YOU, ARESH.
DON'T REPEAT THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST.
GEEZ... YOU'RE BOTH SO IMPULSIVE.
GACHA (KACHAK)
OH, IS THAT KONDOU?
LEAVING SO SOON?

GOOD MORN-ING.
IST-SAN.
YOU LOOK WELL!
SIGMA-KUN!
HE MADE THE ABACUS FOR ME.
TON (TAP)
HISO (WHISPER)
Who's the kid?

I SEE...
I WAS READY FOR HIM TO LECTURE ME...
...BUT HE'S IN A GOOD MOOD TODAY...
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE...?
UM...
FWEH!
MISTER IST INVITED ME TO SEE THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT...
...SO WE COULD MAKE A MAGIC TOOL TOGETHER.
WHAT!?
I'VE... ALWAYS THOUGHT MAGIC TOOLS WERE AMAZING, BUT...

...THEY COST A LOT TO MAKE...
...AND I DON'T HAVE MUCH MAGICAL ENERGY...
.....
EVEN IF I GOT TO BE INVOLVED, ONLY EXPERTS EMPLOYED BY NOBLES MAKE THEM, SO...
...I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD GET THE CHANCE.
IT FEELS LIKE I'M DREAMING ...!
HE'S BEEN POACHED!
HE'S CREATIVE AND AMBITIOUS.
I THOUGHT I'D SEND HIM TO THE CRAM SCHOOL, LET HIM GET AN EDUCATION, AND...
...MAYBE HAVE HIM JOIN THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT SOMEDAY...!

WELL DONE, IST-SAN...
YURARI (STAGGER)
GOSO (RUSTLE) GOSO
ゴソゴソッ…
WE MADE SOMETHING AMAZING, KONDOU!
IT'S A PROTOTYPE BASED ON SIGMA'S CONCEPT.
YOU CAN USE THIS TO MEASURE MAGICAL ENERGY!
—ん！
ぱかぱか
PAKAPAAAN (DUNDADUUUN)
I HAVE MANY QUESTIONS.
GASHI (GRAB)
HEY.
YOU'VE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL FOR DAYS...
...AND JUST GOT OUT.
WHAT'S MAKING YOU SO EAGER TO WORK?
OH... UM, BUT...

IST-SAN, PLEASE WRITE THIS UP FOR ME...
WE'RE GOING HOME!!
...OKAY.
AH... IT'S NO USE.
PASA (FLAP)
U-UM...
IT'S JUST A SIMPLE OUTLINE, BUT...
...HERE ARE THE MECHANISM AND THE MATERIALS WE USED.

GYU (GLOMP)
YOU'RE THE BEST, SIGMA-KUN!
PIKU (TWITCH)
HNNNGH!
WHAT SHOULD I DO ...?
BUT IT WILL MAKE MY JOB A LOT EASIER IF HE'S IN THE SORCERY DEPART-MENT...
OUT-STANDING!
I WISH HE'D COME TO THE ACCOUNTING DEPART-MENT! I WANT TO TRAIN HIM MYSELF!

みちいいいいい
MICHIIIIII (SQUEEEEEZE)
AAAH...
DID YOU ALREADY FORGET WHAT I JUST SAID TO YOU?
OF COURSE NOT. LET'S HEAD HOME— OWWW!
GATAN (RATTLE)
ガラ
WH...?

LET GO OF HIM!
!?
SHA (SWISH)
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MASTER SEIICHIROU!? HE'S ONLY JUST RECOVERED!
IT WAS MY FAULT, ARESH-SAMA. NOW PLEASE RELEASE ME.
DON'T MIND HIM.
GYUUUUUUUU (SQUEEEEEZE)
YOU'RE CHOKING ME... YOU'RE CHOKING ME!

I'M SORRY, SIEGVOLD-SAMA.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO CAUSE A FUSS.
KNOCK IT OFF!
IT WAS NOTHING, SO PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
CHOKING YOU IS HARDLY "NOTHING"!
WHAT AN IMMATURE THING TO DO...!
.....
YOU SURE GET A LOT OF LOVE, KONDOU.
CAN YOU REALLY CALL THIS LOVE?
...HM, THEY'RE SIMILAR, AREN'T THEY?
WHAT'S SIMILAR?

THE COLOR OF THEIR EYES.
THEY BOTH HAVE PURPLE ONES...
AHH. YEAH, THAT'S UNUSUAL.
IT'S A RARE COLOR EVEN FOR NOBLE FAMILIES.

I'M VERY GRATEFUL THAT YOU SAVED MASTER SEIICHIROU'S LIFE. HOWEVER...
AH...!
WON'T YOU PLEASE SLEEP WITH KONDOU?
HE'LL BE FINE, SINCE HE'S WITH ARESH.
HE'S USED TO IT, AFTER ALL.
じっ...?
?
じっ... JI (STARE)
?
.....
SIEG-VOLD-SAMA?
FORGIVE ME. IT'S NOTHING.
かあ KAAA (BLUSH)

ARE YOU FEELING BETTER NOW?
I AM.
I GOT PLENTY OF REST HERE.
PLEASE LET ME KNOW...
...IF I CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE REGARDING WHAT WE DISCUSSED.
WHAT DID YOU DISCUSS WITH HIM?
I'LL TELL YOU WHEN WE'RE HOME.

HEY...
IT'S A SIMPLE QUESTION.
HE STILL HAS TO ATTEND CRAM SCHOOL, SO HE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET A JOB RIGHT AWAY, BUT I WANTED TO SEE IF...
DO YOU PLAN TO COME BACK TO THE SORCERY DEPARTMENT, SIGMA-KUN?
...
OWWWW!
OKAY, I WAS WRONG!
I UNDER-STAND!
DON'T WORRY, I'LL READ THESE DOCUMENTS CALMLY AT HO—
OW!!
WAS THAT THE WRONG ANSWER TOO!?
AAAAAAH!!
LET'S GO, SIGMA.
THERE'S MORE RESEARCH TO DO!

WELCOME HOME...
...MASTERS.

KACHA
(CLINK)
カチャ…
PATAN
(PTAM)
パタン
…
SARA
(SLIDE)
サラ…

YOU'VE LOST SOME WEIGHT.
IT HAPPENS AFTER EXPEDITIONS SOMETIMES.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN SKINNY, SO...
...YOU SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY.
HAVE YOU...LOST WEIGHT AS WELL, ARESH-SAMA?
.....
WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTH-ING...

ARESH-SAMA...
...THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME.
OF COURSE ...

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PRAYER CHAMBER WAS NO ACCIDENT.
BUT WHY WAS I THE TARGET?
I RECEIVED THE CHURCH'S EXPENSE REPORTS THROUGH OFFICIAL MEANS...
...AND WAS BASICALLY DONE REVIEWING THEM.
THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT FOR ME TO DO AT THE CHURCH.
MY JOB WOULD BE DONE ONCE I SUBMITTED THE EXPENSE REPORTS TO THE PRIME MINISTER...
...AND AS SOMEONE WITH ALMOST NO MAGICAL ENERGY, NOTHING HAPPENING AT THE CHURCH HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH ME.
THE CHURCH'S CRAM SCHOOL WILL MOSTLY BE LEFT TO HIS HIGHNESS AND THE HOLY MAIDEN...
...WITH ME DOING WORK BEHIND THE SCENES.
AND YET...
...WHY DOES IT FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS WRONG HERE...?

SOME-THING ISN'T RIGHT.

SOME-THING...

NO, THAT'S NOT IT.

THAT'S NOT IT EITHER...

I'M FINE.
I'M NOT IN ANY PAIN.
ARE YOU SURE?
YOU LIE A LOT.
I MEAN IT!
I'M MORE WORRIED ABOUT YOU, ARESH-SAMA.
YOU WENT FROM AN EXPEDITION STRAIGHT INTO A MAGIC BEAST HUNT.
ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE FULLY RECOVERED ...?
I'M FINE NOW.

...I'M SORRY I SCARED YOU.
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT?
UM... ARESH-SAMA.
WHAT?

HUH?
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT ME TO DO OR SOME ITEM YOU DESIRE?

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE AGAIN.
BUT YOU WON'T ACCEPT MONEY, WILL YOU?

THAT'S WHY...IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO, I'D LIKE TO DO IT FOR YOU.
NO...I DON'T WAN—
PLEASE, YOU CAN ASK FOR ANYTHING.
PIKU
PIKU

GI (CREAK)
I OWE YOU MY LIFE, ARESH-SAMA. I DON'T MIND IF YOU ASK FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE UNREASON-ABLE.
ANYTHING... YOU SAY?
KOTSU (CLACK)
IN THAT CASE ...
ALTHOUGH, I WON'T QUIT MY JOB.
YES... ANYTHING.

HUH?
...CHANGE THE WAY YOU TALK.
...WHAT? HAVE I SAID SOMETHING RUDE BY MISTAKE?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT.
I'M TELLING YOU TO CHANGE HOW YOU SPEAK TO ME.
HOW I SPEAK TO YOU?
TALK TO ME...
...AS INFORMALLY AS YOU DO TO THAT KID.

HUH...?
THAT KID?
...YOU MEAN SIGMA-KUN?
GIRI (GRIP)
SO WHAT?
WE HAVE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIP THAN YOU AND I DO...
...AND I'M A PATRON OF THE STALL HE RUNS.
UM...HE'S FROM THE LOWER PART OF TOWN...
I'M MUCH CLOSER TO YOU THAN SOME RANDOM KID!

DOES HE MEAN...?

KYUU (THROB)

UGH... MY CHEST HURTS...
BOSU (FWOMP)
!?
WHERE !?
WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE!?
LET ME SEE!
I'M FINE! I'M NOT SICK OR ANYTHING!
MY CHEST IS WARM AND MY HEART IS THROBBING...
...MAKING IT HARD TO BREATHE.
HEY!
SEICHI-ROU!
I'M...IN TROUBLE...

Chapter
36
BRING ME THE NEXT SET OF DOCUMENTS, NOR.
SEI, YOU'VE ONLY JUST GOTTEN BETTER.
YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T RUSH...

BUT IT'S YOUR LUNCH BRE—
THE SORCERY DEPARTMENT ALREADY TOOK UP A LOT OF MY TIME THIS MORNING...
...SO I HAVE TO USE MY BREAK TO CATCH UP...
FURURU (TREMBLE)
ふるる…
GUUU (GURGLE)
うう…
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO WORK THE ENTIRE WEEK.
WHEN ARE YOU GONNA GET TO A STOPPING POINT!?
I'M ABOUT TO FAINT FROM HUNGER!
YOU CAN GO WITHOUT ME.
I WON'T MAKE IT BACK ALIVE IF I DO THAT!
KA (CLACK)
カ
カ
KA
SEIICHI-ROU!
BAN (BANG)

IT'S WELL INTO THE FIRE HOUR ALREADY!
WHY AREN'T YOU AT LUNCH? HURRY UP!
ｶﾞｼｯ
GASHI (CLAMP)
I TOTALLY FORGOT ABOUT MY LUNCH BREAK...

YOU HEARD THE NOON BELL, DIDN'T YOU?
GUGUGUGU (GRIND)
SO...
...WHY ARE...
...YOU STILL HERE?
"I WAS SO FOCUSED, I DIDN'T HEAR IT."
I HEARD THE BELL, BUT I WASN'T AT A GOOD STOPPING POINT...
...HE'LL SCOLD ME IF I SAY THAT.
GASHI (CLAMP)
HUH?
PISHAAAN (CRACK)
IN THE END...
...AS USUAL...

I TOLD YOU TO EAT PROPER MEALS, DIDN'T I?
YOU EVEN PROMISED...
...TO EAT IN THE CAFETERIA WITH ME WHEN YOU HAD WORK IN THE PALACE.
JITO (GLARE)
じと
AH!
THAT WAS LESS OF A PROMISE...
...AND MORE OF AN ASSIGNMENT YOU FORCED ON ME...!

LET'S HEAD TO THE CAFETERIA NOW...
I'M SORRY. IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO WORK, I ENDED UP GETTING LOST IN IT.
...ARESH-SAN.
GO
PIKU (TWITCH)
HMPH...
...LET'S GO.
OKAY!
"SAN" !?

.....
TALK TO ME...
...AS INFORMALLY AS YOU DO TO THAT KID.

PON (PLOP)
ぽんっ
THEY HAVE TSUHASH SOUP TODAY TOO.
IT WAS A DIFFICULT PROPOSAL.
AFTER MUCH DISCUS-SION...
...WE AGREED TO COMPROMISE FOR NOW— SO I'M ONLY CHANGING THE WAY I SAY HIS NAME.
I NEVER THOUGHT IT'D HAVE SUCH AN EFFECT ON HIS MOOD...
O-OKAY THEN, I'LL BE ON MY WAY...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU'RE COMING TOO.

MIND IF I JOIN YOU THREE?

ザワ…
ZAWA (MURMUR)
ザワ…
ZAWA
YES, THANK YOU.
トポポポ…
TOPOPO (GLUG)
ARE YOU FEELING BETTER NOW...
...SEIICHI-ROU?
YES. AND AS FAR AS REPORTS GO...
IT SOUNDS LIKE THE CHURCH PROVIDED YOU ADEQUATE EXPENSE REPORTS.

I RECEIVED THE REPORT ON THE MATTER YOU MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY.
YOU WENT THROUGH A LOT, DIDN'T YOU?
NO... IT'S ALL PART OF THE JOB.
THINGS WERE FINALLY SETTLING DOWN WITH THE MIASMA UNDER CONTROL, BUT...
...THIS ISN'T SOMETHING I CAN IGNORE EITHER.
KACHAN (CLINK) カチャン...
YOU ALSO MENTIONED THE MAGICAL ENERGY ISSUE, YES?
DO YOU THINK WE CAN ALSO MAKE USE OF IT?

...PLEASE GO EASY ON ME.
AS YOU KNOW, THERE ARE VARIOUS HURDLES WHEN DEALING WITH A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION.
OH MY...
THERE'S LITTLE I CAN DO...
...TO HELP WITH YOUR POLITICAL REQUESTS.
HE... WANTS ME TO HELP HIM PUT A COLLAR ON THE CHURCH.
ALL I'M CAPABLE OF IS COUNTING MONEY, SO THAT'S OUTSIDE OF MY PURVIEW.
I'M ALSO LIMITED BY THE PARAMETERS OF MY JOB.
I DON'T WANT TO MEDDLE TOO DEEPLY FOR THE SAKE OF SEPARATING CHURCH AND STATE.

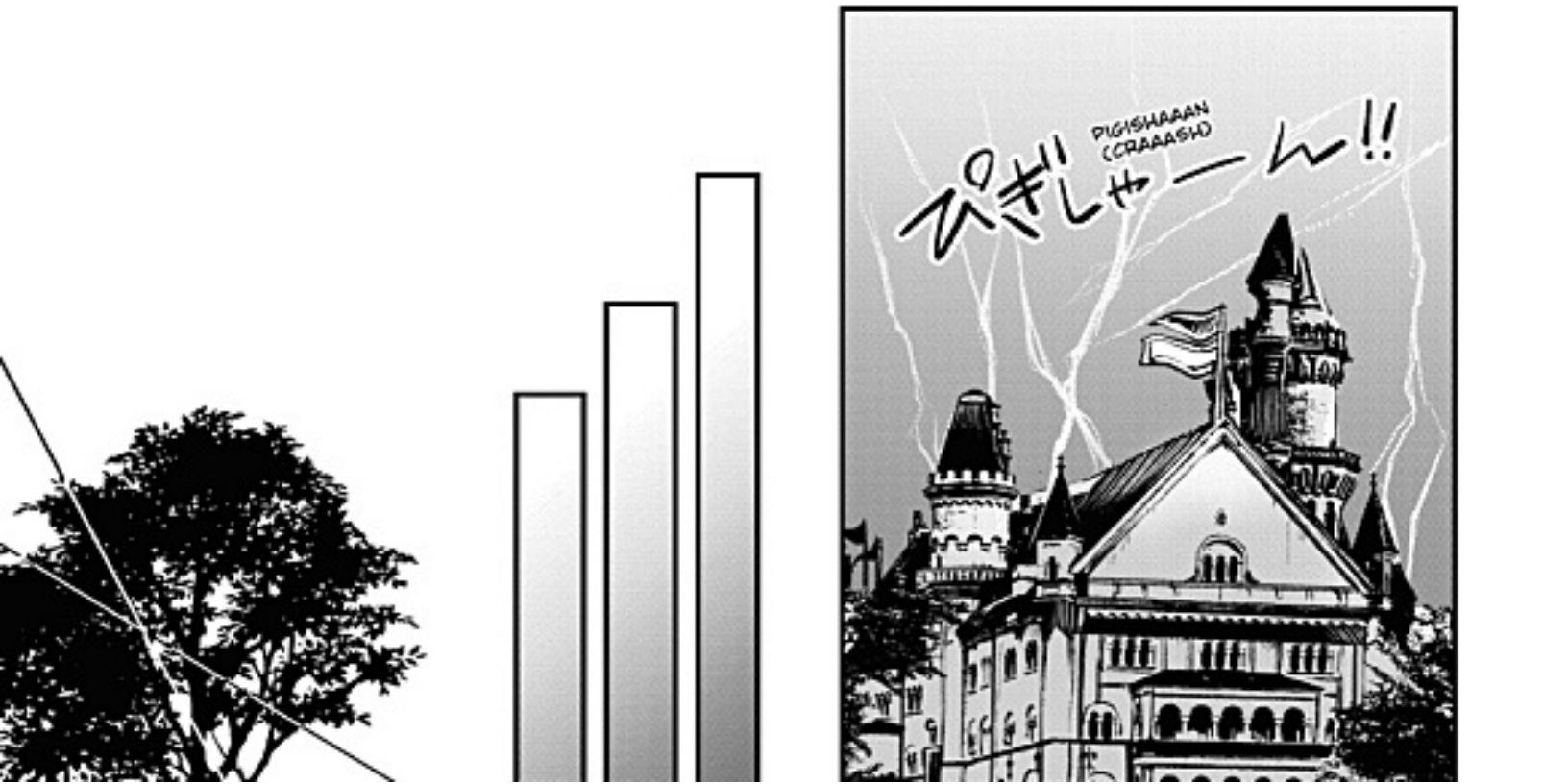
WHAT I NEED ARE FACTS AND TANGIBLE RESULTS.
I WILL SOON BE SUBMITTING A LIST...
...OF NOBLES WHO WERE CONFIRMED TO HAVE MADE NO DONATIONS ACCORDING TO CHURCH LEDGERS...
...AND EXACT FIGURES FROM LAST YEAR, COMPARED AGAINST THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT'S DOCUMENTS.
AS I BELIEVE PEOPLE WILL COME FORWARD TO COMPLAIN OF...
...THEIR NAMES BEING REMOVED OR DONATIONS UNDER-REPORTED...
...MAY I ASK THAT YOU WORK THAT OUT WITH THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT?

AS FOR THE INCIDENT DURING THE SPECIAL PRAYER...
...THE SORCERY DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING A DEVICE THAT CAN MEASURE THE AMOUNT OF MAGICAL ENERGY USED...
...BASED ON HOW MUCH WAS NEEDED TO BLOCK IT WITH A BARRIER.
THEY'RE ALSO BEING REVIEWED BY A WORKER WHO HANDLES ALL KINDS OF MAGIC TOOLS...
...SO ONCE BOTH PARTIES ARE FINISHED, I'LL DELIVER THE RESULTS.
AHH... VERY GOOD.
YOU'RE TRULY BRILLIANT, SEIICHIROU.

COME AND SEE ME...
...ONCE YOU'RE SICK OF THAT DARK BEAST THERE.
KEH HEH HEH...!
PLEASE DON'T JOKE...
I LIKE HOW COOLHEADED YOU ARE...
...AND HOW YOU MAINTAIN DISTANCE BETWEEN YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK...

YOU'RE REALLY INTERESTED IN THIS ASSIGNMENT, AREN'T YOU?
HE LOOKS AT ME LIKE HE CAN SEE STRAIGHT INTO MY HEART.
IF WE'RE GUESSING EACH OTHER'S INTENTIONS, I DON'T THINK I CAN GET THE BETTER OF HIM.
... THAT'S TRUE.
AFTER THE ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE...
...I DO FEEL THE URGE TO SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END.
I HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW WHY I WAS TARGETED...
...AND TO EXACT REVENGE.
THAT CAN ONLY HAPPEN ONCE I EXPOSE THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE THE CHURCH.

...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
TELL ME EVERY-THING.
AH...


PIGISHAAAN (CRAAASH)
ピギシャーーン!!

A FEW DAYS LATER
GARA (RATTLE)
ガラ
GARA
ガラ
GARA
ガラ
トン
TON (TMP)

WH-WHY'RE YOU...?
I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T COMING HERE ANYMORE ...!
MY INVESTI-GATION IS COMPLETE, BUT...
...THERE'S STILL THE CRAM SCHOOL, REMEMBER?
AH!
DON'T JUST BARGE IN! YOU NEED PERMISSION!
FROM WHO?
THE BISHOP'S ALREADY APPROVED THE SCHOOL PROJECT.
BA (FWIP)
BOSO (MUTTER) ぼそ...
...What, you're healthy now...?

WHAT WAS THAT?
AAAAAAGH!!!
NOTHING!
ANYWAY! YOU NEED TO ASK FATHER SIEGVOLD FIRST!
VERY WELL.

WHAT'S WRONG?
FATHER SIEGVOLD HAS A GUEST RIGHT NOW...
...SO BEAT IT.
HE'S TOO IMPORTANT A PERSON...
...TO MEET WITH A SERVANT AND THE FOREIGN TAGALONG ON A WHIM.
IT'S FORBIDDEN TO DISCRIMINATE BASED ON BLOODLINE AND BIRTH CIRCUMSTANCE WITHIN THE CHURCH!
WHAT DID YOU SAY TO ME...?
PLUS... HE... THIS MAN...

WHICH ONE OF US IS REALLY DEFYING THE TEACHINGS OF ABRAN!?
HOW DARE...
GU (CLENCH)
...YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT!?
...EDUCATES COMMONERS AND ORPHANS...
...SO THAT WE'LL HAVE MORE OPPORTUNI-TIES IN THE FUTURE!
BA (FWOOM)

GACHA (KACHAK)
ガチャ…
WHAT'S GOING ON OVER HERE?
F-FORGIVE ME, FATHER SIEG-VOLD...
...AND CAPTAIN INDO-LARK.
HE CAME AND DEMANDED TO BE LET IN...
...EVEN THOUGH YOU TWO WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A MEETING...!

I'M THE ONE WHO INVITED HIM HERE.
AH, THAT'S FINE.
WHAT ...!?
TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH.
YOUR CAPE'S CROOKED.
WAS I LATE?
すっ…
GU (SST)

SELIO.
AH!
Y-YES!?
WE'RE HEADING TO THE PRAYER CHAMBER, SO...
...CALL THE OTHER CHILDREN AND JOIN US.
YES, SIR.
SUTOTOTOTO (TEPTEPTEP)
...YES.
YOU CAN RETURN TO YOUR POST, FREDRIK.
MASTER SEIICHI-ROU.
YOU'RE LOOKING WELL TODAY.
YES, THANKS TO YOUR EFFORTS.
BUT THEY WERE MY EFFORTS.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS REFERRING TO, ARESH-SAN.

YOU'RE BOTHERING FATHER SIEGVOLD.
.....
HEY... DON'T SAY IT LIKE THAT.
MASTER SEIICHI-ROU...
...YOU PROMISED ME YOU'D REFER TO ME LESS FORMALLY.
AHH... THAT'S RIGHT, I FORGOT...
...SIEG-VOLD-SAMA.
GYU (SQUEEZE)
...IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ADD "SAMA" TO MY NAME...
...WHEN YOU USE "SAN" WITH A CAPTAIN OF A ROYAL ORDER.
HUH?

THAT'S... BECAUSE ARESH-SAN AND I ARE QUITE CLOSE. UM...
...I ADDRESS HIM THAT WAY... BECAUSE WE'RE FRIENDS.
CAN'T I... BE YOUR FRIEND TOO?
IT'S JUST... WE HAVE VERY DIFFERENT POSITIONS, SO...
ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE EQUAL BEFORE GOD.
.....

SIEGVOLD-SAMA?
WHOA!
HEY...! ARESH-SAN?
TA (STEP) たっ
TA たっ
TA たっ
KONDOU-SAN!

BASA (FLAP) バサッ
SHIRAI-SHI-SAN!?
I WAS TAKING THE CHILDREN TO THE PRAYER CHAMBER WHEN I RAN INTO SELIO-KUN!
GASHI (CLAMP) がしっ
ARE YOU PRAYING TOO, ARESH-SAN?

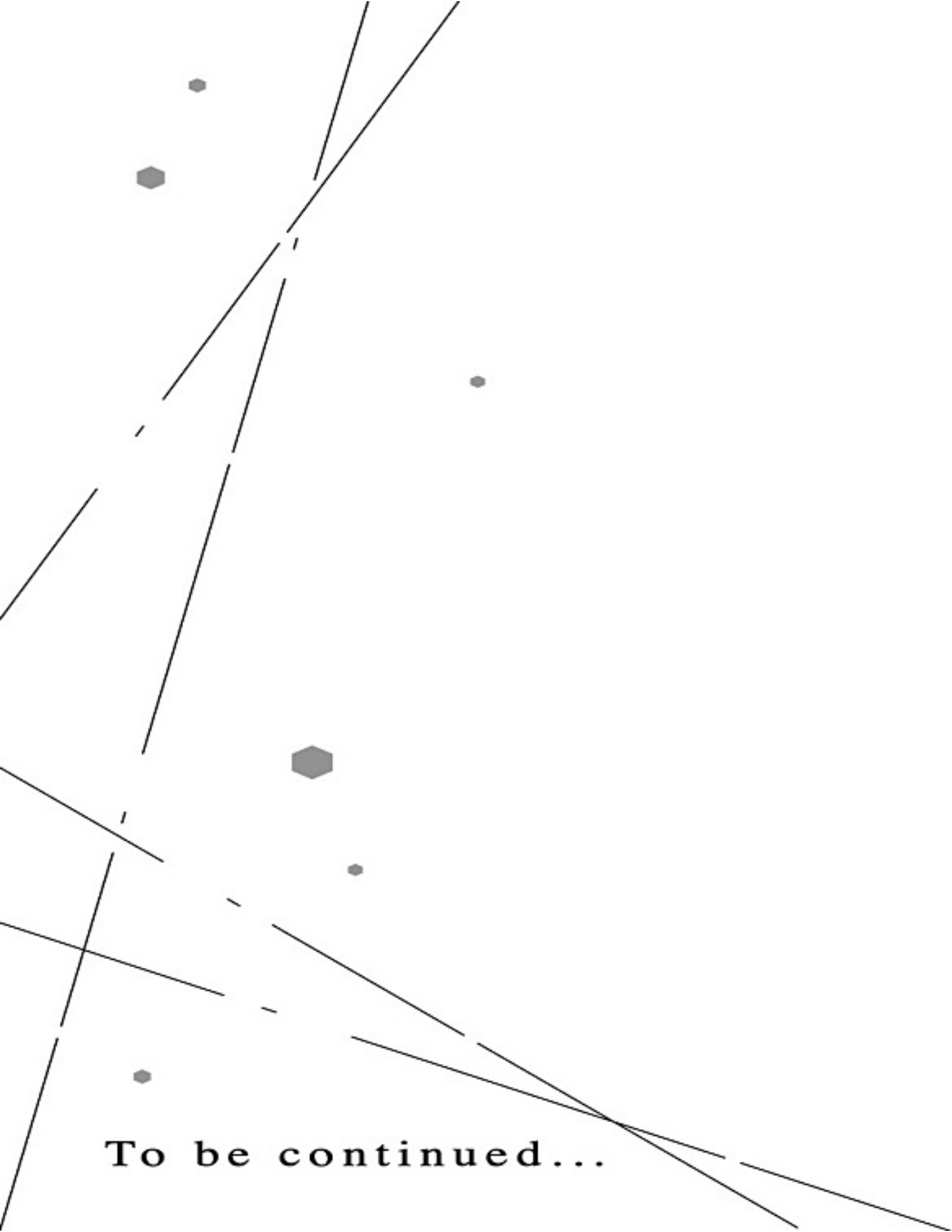
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
ZURIRI (DRAG) ずりり
WHY IS ARESH HERE!?
PURURURURU (TREMBLE)

DIDN'T YOU MAKE HER STOP AFTER LAST TIME ...?
WHY IS SHE TAKING PART IN THE PRAYER CEREMONY AGAIN?
URK...
HE HAS HIS REASONS.
THE REAL ISSUE IS SHIRAISHI-SAN.
...I'VE BEEN KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON THINGS.
SINCE THE PURIFI-CATION IS DONE FOR NOW...
I WAS JUST CURIOUS ABOUT SOMETHING ...
...YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT TOO...?
...ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE BARRIER?
PIKU (TWITCH)
HU...

GOSO (RUSTLE)
THAT'S GOOD NEWS.
SARA (SCRATCH)
サラサラ…
SARA
I HAD MY PEOPLE LOOK INTO IT, BUT...
...THEY FOUND THAT YUA'S MAGICAL ENERGY WASN'T USED IN THE BARRIER.
I ONLY RECENTLY LEARNED THAT MAGICAL ENERGY HAS DIFFERENT ATTRIBUTES, BUT...
...I HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO REALLY LOOK INTO IT YET, SO I APPRECIATE THE HELP.
.....
...HANG ON.
YOU JUST INCLUDED ME AND YUA...
...IN SOME SORT OF PLAN, DIDN'T YOU?

SINCE YOU TWO HAPPENED TO BE HERE...
...IS THERE ANY PROBLEM IN ASKING YOU TO ASSIST ME?
.....
THOSE TWO SEEM TO BE GETTING ALONG!
WHO DO YOU THINK I AM, EXACTLY?
SUCH IMPERTI-NENCE.
ALL THIS TIME, I'VE NEVER SENSED YOU GIVING ME AN OUNCE OF HONOR OR RESPECT, YOU KNOW.
OH, HE NOTICED ...?
THERE'S A SAYING IN MY COUNTRY.
IT GOES, "WHEN IN NEED, MAKE USE OF ANYONE, EVEN YOUR OWN PARENTS."
...I GUESS I HAVE NO CHOICE.
WHAT KIND OF COUNTRY IS THAT !?
MY AND SHIRAISHI-SAN'S HOMELAND.
UGH...

LET'S GO, YURI-SAMA.
IT'S TIME TO LEARN THE TRUTH...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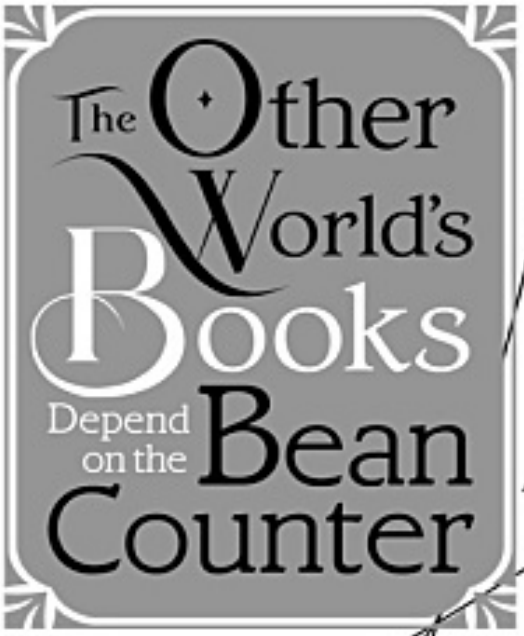
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THE DAY AFTER SEIICHIROU'S HOSPITAL DISCHARGE
PACHI (BLINK)
BONUS CHAPTER
THE FUTURE OUTLOOK DEPENDS ON THE TWO OF THEM?
.....

HE'S OUT COLD...
IT'S BEEN A MONTH SINCE I FIRST BEGAN INVESTIGATING THE CHURCH...
IN
I CALLED IT QUITS AFTER I WAS HOSPITALIZED, BUT...
...I CAN FINALLY GO BACK TO THE OFFICE TODAY.

JAAA (FSSSH)
GOOD MORNING, ARESH-SAN.
THANK YOU.
UHH... MORNING.
I DIDN'T WAKE YOU, DID I?
NO... I JUST HAPPENED TO GET UP.
DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
DOKI (BADUMP)

SEIICHI-ROU.
YES, THANK YOU...
I'M FEELING MUCH BETTER.
...I SEE.
IT'S ONLY BEEN A DAY SINCE YOU WERE DISCHARGED.
DON'T LET LOOSE JUST BECAUSE YOU GET TO RETURN TO WORK AGAIN.
GOT IT?
...YES.

IT'S DELICIOUS.
ESPECIALLY THIS SOUP...
HOW DOES EVERY-THING TASTE...
...MASTER KONDOU?
TA-DAAH
THE BROTH ACTUALLY CONTAINS TRIMP!
WHAT!?
WOW...
MASTER KONDOU MEANS SO MUCH TO HIM.
YES... MASTER SEEMS PLEASED TOO.
I SEE THE MANOR IS FULL OF LIFE ONCE MORE.

I HOPE THESE DAYS CONTINUE FOREVER, BUT...
...PERHAPS IT IS WRONG...
...TO WISH... FOR SUCH A THING.
IF THEY SUCCEED IN INVENTING A MEANS TO RETURN TO HIS WORLD...
...WILL MASTER KONDOU...
...DEPART FROM THIS ONE IN THE END?
.....
PREDICT-ING HOW SOMEONE'S FEELINGS MIGHT CHANGE...
...IS NEVER EASY...

STILL, WHATEVER MAY COME...
DID YOU EAT ENOUGH?
...WE WILL ALWAYS BE HERE...
YES.
...TO OFFER HIM OUR SUPPORT.
LET US WATCH OVER HIM TOGETH-ER.
SHAKI (SNAP)
しゃ
き
OKAY... I'M DONE EATING.
はっ
BA (FWIP)
IT'S TIME TO GO TO WORK.

WHAT?
...NOTH-ING.
COME HERE, SEIICHIROU.
?
I CAN'T SAY THAT I FELT RELIEVED SEEING HIM IN HIS UNIFORM AGAIN!

パチン
PACHIN (SNAP)
THERE. THAT'S BETTER.
TH-THANK YOU.
FUWA (FWISH)

HAVE A GREAT DAY.

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- ALL MY READERS

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6

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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